

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4213

To establish the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 29, 2021

Mr. CASTRO of Texas (for himself and Ms. TENNEY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Young Southeast Asian
5 Leaders Initiative Act” or the “YSEALI Act”.

6 SEC. 2. YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS INITIATIVE.

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the
8 Department of State the Young Southeast Asian Leaders
9 Initiative (“YSEALI”) program.

1 (b) GOALS.—The YSEALI program shall seek to
2 build to capacity of young leaders in Southeast Asia to—

3 (1) support young leaders from Southeast Asia
4 by offering professional development and a global
5 network to share expertise, including in the areas of
6 civic engagement, economic empowerment and social
7 entrepreneurship, education and environmental
8 issues; and

9 (2) further strengthen the enduring partnership
10 between the United States and Southeast Asia and
11 connect United States experts with YSEALI partici-
12 pants.

13 (c) YSEALI PROGRAMS.—

14 (1) YSEALI ACADEMIC FELLOWS PROGRAM.—
15 There is established the YSEALI Academic Fellows
16 Program to bring students from YSEALI partner
17 countries to the United States for the purposes of
18 building practical expertise, leadership skills, and
19 professional networks relating to one or more of the
20 YSEALI themes. The Secretary of State may award
21 fellowships under the Academic Fellows Program to
22 eligible individuals based on the following:

23 (A) Citizenship and residency in a
24 YSEALI partner country.

(B) Status as a full-time undergraduate student, or recent graduate of college, university, or other institutions of higher learning.

(C) Other criteria determined appropriate by the Secretary.

(2) YSEALI PROFESSIONAL FELLOWS PROGRAM.—There is established the YSEALI Professional Fellows Program to bring professionals from YSEALI partner countries to the United States for the purposes of building practical expertise, leadership skills, and professional networks relating to one or more of the YSEALI themes. The Secretary of State may award fellowships under the Professional Fellows Program to eligible individuals based on the following:

(A) Citizenship and residency in a YSEALI partner country.

(B) Status as an emerging leader in government, civil society, or the private sector, and demonstrated expertise relating to one or more of the YSEALI themes.

(C) Current employment, and two or more years of professional work experience relevant to one or more YSEALI themes.

(D) Other criteria determined appropriate by the Secretary.

8 (d) ACTIVITIES.—

(A) Quality leadership training, professional development, and networking opportunities for YSEALI alumni.

(B) Reciprocal exchanges for YSEALI Professional Fellows Program's United States professional hosts and interlocutors to support post-United States exchange action plans and other related public diplomacy goals, as appropriate.

(C) Opportunities for networking with YSEALI alumni and professionals and experts who are American and Southeast Asian.

(D) The YSEALI Regional Workshop program, offering networking, mentoring, hands-on training, and the tools necessary to lead communities in addressing economic, environmental, educational, and civic engagement issues.

(E) The YSEALI Seeds for the Future program, providing small, competitive grants to young leaders in Southeast Asia to improve their communities, countries, and the region towards one or more of the themes of civic engagement, economic empowerment and social

1 entrepreneurship, education, or environmental
2 issues.

3 (F) The YSEALI Academy at Fulbright
4 University Vietnam, offering executive-level
5 seminars for entry to mid-level professionals
6 around the themes of technology and innova-
7 tion, public policy, and entrepreneurship.

8 (G) The YSEALI Women's Leadership
9 Academy Program, enhancing people-to-people
10 ties and engagement with young and emerging
11 leaders by promoting gender equality and ad-
12 vancing the status of women and girls, such as
13 in the public health sector.

14 (3) ALUMNI PLATFORM.—The Secretary of
15 State is authorized to convene current YSEALI par-
16 ticipants and YSEALI alumni through a platform to
17 promote networking opportunities within the
18 YSEALI community.

19 (4) IMPLEMENTATION.—To carry out this sub-
20 section, United States diplomatic and consular posts,
21 the Secretary of State, and agency external partners
22 managing and implementing the YSEALI pro-
23 gram—

24 (A) shall promote United States policy
25 goals in Southeast Asia by providing tools and

1 resources to help young Southeast Asian leaders
2 develop important skills and connections, in-
3 cluding through online campaigns and public di-
4 plomacy initiatives;

5 (B) shall establish a system for moni-
6 toring, evaluating, and improving the YSEALI
7 program; and

8 (C) may accept financial contributions
9 from foundations, corporations, private donors,
10 program partners, and implementing agency ex-
11 ternal partners intended to foster the goals of
12 the YSEALI program.

13 (e) REPORTS.—

14 (1) STRATEGY.—The Secretary of State shall
15 submit to the appropriate congressional committees
16 a strategy for implementing the YSEALI program,
17 including the following:

18 (A) YSEALI program goals, targets, and
19 planned outcomes for each year and, separately,
20 for the YSEALI program generally during the
21 duration of its implementation.

22 (B) The continuation of YSEALI program
23 monitoring and evaluation plan, including
24 metrics for measuring YSEALI program

1 progress identification of annual YSEALI pro-
2 gram goals, and targets.

3 (2) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year
4 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
5 nually thereafter for 4 years, the Secretary of State
6 shall submit to the appropriate congressional com-
7 mittees and publish on a publicly available website
8 of the Department a report on—

9 (A) YSEALI program progress and an as-
10 essment of the metrics, goals, targets, and out-
11 comes described in paragraph (1)(A), including
12 information relating to YSEALI program im-
13 plementation and outcome activities during the
14 year covered by each report; and

15 (B) recommendations for improvements or
16 amendments to the YSEALI program and
17 strategy, if any, that would improve their effec-
18 tiveness during subsequent years of YSEALI
19 program implementation.

20 (3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than the date of
21 the submission of the last report required under
22 paragraph (2), the Secretary of State shall submit
23 to the appropriate congressional committees a final
24 assessment report that evaluates YSEALI program
25 implementation and outcomes during the entire du-

1 ration of YSEALI program operation, including rec-
2 ommendations regarding whether the YSEALI pro-
3 gram should be reauthorized and any changes that
4 would improve its effectiveness.

5 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

6 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
7 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
8 mittees” means—

9 (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
10 the House of Representatives;

11 (B) the Committee on Appropriations of
12 the House of Representatives;

13 (C) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
14 the Senate; and

15 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
16 the Senate.

17 (2) IMPLEMENTING AGENCY EXTERNAL PART-
18 NERS.—The term “implementing agency external
19 partners” means any external partner that is not a
20 United States Government agency, and may include
21 one or more of the following entities:

22 (A) Local or multinational corporations.

23 (B) Nongovernmental organizations.

24 (C) Universities.

25 (D) Regional institutions.

1 (3) YSEALI THEME.—The term “YSEALI
2 theme” means—

- 3 (A) civic engagement;
4 (B) economic empowerment and social en-
5 trepreneurship;
6 (C) education;
7 (D) environmental issues; or
8 (E) any other theme included by the Sec-
9 retary of State.

10 (4) YSEALI PARTNER COUNTRIES.—The term
11 “YSEALI partner countries” includes each member
12 country of the Association of Southeast Asian Na-
13 tions and each other country or political entity the
14 Secretary of State determines appropriate to include
15 in the programs established under this section.

